



Washington State Patrol Media Release

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January 12, 2006

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January 13th Marks Tenth Anniversary of National AMBER Alert System

It was January 13, 1996 when Amber Hagerman of Fort Worth Texas was kidnapped. She was abducted while riding her bicycle and was brutally murdered. While the details of the suspect were provided to the police, there was no system to quickly inform the community about Amber's disappearance. Through significant community effort, local media was asked to devise a plan to immediately broadcast abduction information. In remembrance of Amber, her name became the nationally recognized acronym for the AMBER Alert (America's **M**issing **B**roadcast **E**mergency **R**esponse).

"This system has been an important tool to help find missing children," explained WSP Chief John R. Batiste. "Those first three hours are critical and law enforcement needs the eyes and ears of the public to help. The AMBER Alert system allows the public to partner with law enforcement, for the purpose of finding the children. I am encouraging citizens to honor this anniversary by signing up to receive AMEBR Alert notifications," he said.

Here in the state of Washington, The Washington State Department of Information Services, the Washington State Patrol, the state's Emergency Management Division, the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Washington State Association of Broadcasters, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, and E2C (Engaging & Empowering Citizenship)/Earth 911 created a strategic partnership to develop a way that we can safely recover abducted children. The Washington State AMBER Alert Web portal (www.washingtonamberalert.com) is a tremendous example of how communities, states and citizens have come together to help children. This Web-based technology allows us to notify citizens of child abduction. The alert provides details concerning the child and the perpetrator (if known), including descriptive information. Utilizing the combined power of technology, the media, law enforcement, and the public, the ultimate goal of an AMBER Alert is to ensure the safe return of the child.

For more information on how the AMBER Alert web portal works in Washington State, you may visit the State Patrol Web site at www.wsp.wa.gov. Or, to sign up to personally receive notifications when the AMBER Alert system is activated, go to www.washingtonamberalert.com.

- In July 2004 we started with 62 pre-authorized law enforcement agencies (authorized to initiate their own alerts). We now have 173.
- In July 2004 we had 2,139 total subscribed devices and now have 12,570. Devices include e-mail, cell phone and fax. Many of the e-mails include list serves or multiple address groups that would then be retransmitted to a number of other people.
- In July 2004 Washington State was the only state fully implemented on the AAWP. Now 8 states are fully implemented and other states are considering implementation.
- Since July 2004 we have had 7 alerts within Washington State and all resulted in the safe recovery of the children.

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